

Handbook for Individuals and Families



Information About



Our Vision

Communities where every person lives with dignity and enjoys a full life.

Table of Contents

WORKING TOGETHER – DEVELOPING YOUR SERVICE SO IT WORKS FOR YOU	3
GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH COMMUNITY LIVING SOCIETY	4
OUR ORGANIZATION CHART.....	10
INTRODUCING THE RANGE OF SERVICES WE OFFER	11
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES.....	14
KEEPING YOU AT THE CENTRE – PERSON CENTRED PRACTICE.....	16
SUPPORTING YOU TO EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	19
PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING.....	21
DECISION MAKING AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	24
RESPECTING YOUR PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND CONSENT	25
MONITORING THE QUALITY OF OUR SERVICES	28
BUILDING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU	29
ADDRESSING YOUR PROBLEMS, CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS.....	31
SUPPORTING YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE OUR SERVICES	33

Important

This Handbook was printed on September 26, 2023.

Please note that contents may have changed and the most recent copy of this Handbook should be referenced on our Resource Portal on the CLS website.

<https://www.communitylivingsociety.ca/portfolio-items/important-information-about-clsl/>

Thank you

Welcome to Community Living Society

We are excited to welcome you and the people close to you (family or other members in your personal support network) to our services and look forward to building our relationship with all of you.

We have created this Handbook to help you and/or your personal support network to learn about Community Living Society (CLS), the service you are accessing, and the ways we are committed to supporting you in the programs and services you have chosen. We know you will have lots of questions and our employees will take time with you to go through this Handbook. Feel free to ask lots of questions!

This Handbook is yours to keep. It is something that you can share with your personal support network to help you understand what you can expect from the Community Living Society.

Working Together – Developing Your Service so It Works for You

At Community Living Society, we are dedicated to connecting you with the unique services and supports you need to live a full, happy, empowered life. We offer a wide range of home and community-based supports including: shared homes, supported and independent living, individual (or shared) support to access the community and assist you to learn independence skills or find paid or volunteer work. One of the most important first steps to finding and developing successful support for you is finding out about you and exploring the best ways to meet your needs. At CLS, you are supported to direct your services through the person-centered planning process that identifies the goals you want to achieve and the specific steps and strategies to help you succeed. With the support of your chosen network we assist you to build your plan and develop your skills so that you can *Imagine it – Live it.*

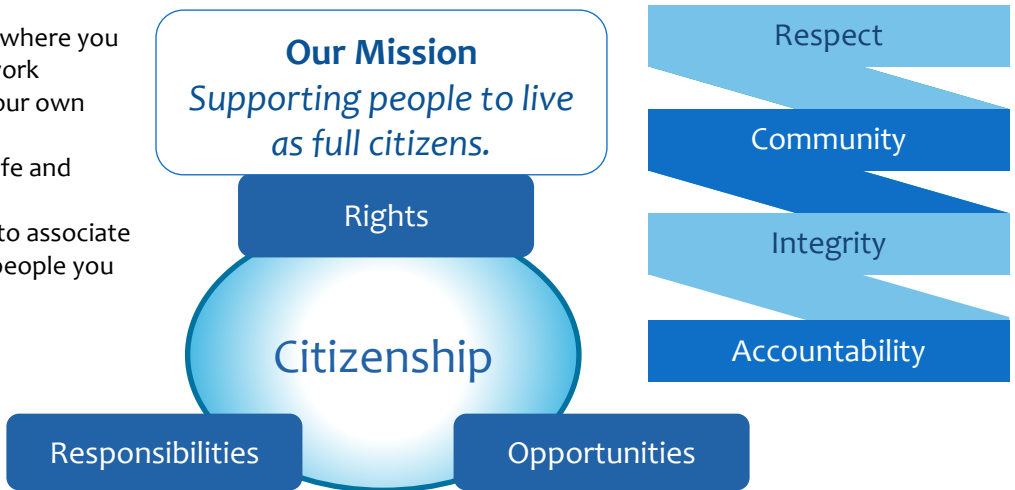
Getting Acquainted with Community Living Society

Our Philosophy

The Community Living Society (CLS) supports adults with a wide range of unique abilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, or acquired brain injuries to live meaningful lives as full citizens.

Our Vision: *Communities where every person lives with dignity and enjoys a full life.*

- ✓ Choosing where you live and work
- ✓ Making your own decisions
- ✓ Feeling safe and secure
- ✓ Freedom to associate with the people you choose



- ✓ Obeying the law
- ✓ Voting in elections
- ✓ Serving on a jury
- ✓ Protecting and enjoying our heritage and our environment

- ✓ Having a job and earning money
- ✓ Giving back and helping others in the community
- ✓ Enjoying personal and intimate relationships
- ✓ Feeling welcomed and being part of community life

Our Beliefs about Citizenship

- ✓ Everyone can participate in, and contribute to, their communities as full citizens.
- ✓ Each person must have the opportunity and support to reach their full potential.
- ✓ Supports and services work best when they are designed with Supported Individuals and their personal support network.
- ✓ Citizenship means having legal rights, being seen as unique, yet equal with others, and making contributions that help make our communities more welcoming for everyone.

Our Values and What They Mean

<p>Respect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every person is a unique individual, with strengths, abilities, and value • Making choices is a right, with support as necessary from friends, family, and trusted advisors • Each person is entitled to live with dignity and equality in a safe and secure environment
<p>Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is where we are known as individuals and as citizens • Each community is strengthened by the inclusion of people from all walks of life • We support social change that contributes to stronger, healthier communities for everyone
<p>Integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are honest and dependable in our interactions with others • We support staff through training and engagement to advance our mission • Best practices guide our efforts to provide flexible and responsive supports and services
<p>Accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal outcomes of the people we serve guide decision making • We use feedback to learn, grow and improve performance • Our financial resources are used in innovative, cost-effective ways

We believe that:

- You are best served in typical family-type homes in your own community, accessing the range of opportunities and experiences available to everyone.
- All our planning and services must focus on your specific requirements of each, to foster your independence, choice, and skills. You and your personal support network have the veto in services and placement planning.
- You must have the opportunity to choose family members and others to support you in making decisions, to ensure that your choices in planning and provision of services are honoured. You must have full access to your chosen personal support network.
- All support systems should be open and accountable to you and your personal support network. In addition to our internal processes there are several types of external monitoring processes to assist with this work: fiscal monitoring by government ministries; health and safety standards set by government and accrediting agencies; quality of life, primarily monitored by yourself and your personal support network.

How We Began

For decades, many people with disability were given little choice but to live in publicly funded institutions like Woodlands – separated from family and friends, without choice or opportunity, and isolated from their communities.

In the 1970s, a small group of parents with children then living in Woodlands came together to champion a new vision for their loved ones – one that would see their children leave institutional life in favour of receiving the direct funding and supports needed to live as full citizens in their home communities. To achieve this, the Woodlands Parents’ Group (as it was known) created the Community Living Society – an organization dedicated to identifying, developing and providing supports to help people with disability live full, empowered, self-determined and inclusive lives within their communities.

Today, thanks to the ongoing leadership of families and self-advocates, the guidance of our dedicated Board, and our team of skilled and passionate employees, the CLS is a leader in the provision of unique and flexible support services for people with developmental disabilities.

Our Team

Our Board of Directors

Formed by families since 1977, CLS continues to be led by the principles of individual and family-driven service. The organization was originally created as a not-for-profit society and independent planning agency, to assist their children as they moved from institutions into the community. It was the strong leadership of these families that moved the government of the time to agree to re-direct funding to community-based opportunities.

Today, people who receive service and their families still participate at every level of CLS, including serving on committees and as Directors on our Board.

Our Employees, Contracted Caregivers, and Volunteers

The Board delegates the day-to-day management of CLS to our Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that quality standards are met regarding hiring the employees; managing the budget; administering the programs; managing relationships with employees, Supported Individuals, families, funding agencies and other partners; developing operational policy; and is accountable to the Board.

The employees report to the Chief Executive Officer and are responsible for the operation of our programs and services. They are the faces you will see on a regular basis. They can be assisted by volunteers and practicum students. Supports in some programs are provided by contracted caregivers.

All employees, contracted caregivers and volunteers follow a Ethical Code of Conduct, Professionalism and Conflict of Interest Agreement. This means that you can expect to be treated with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fairness and that our stated policies and expectations are followed. Our policies and Ethical Code of Conduct, Professionalism and Conflict of Interest Agreement address expectations in the following areas:

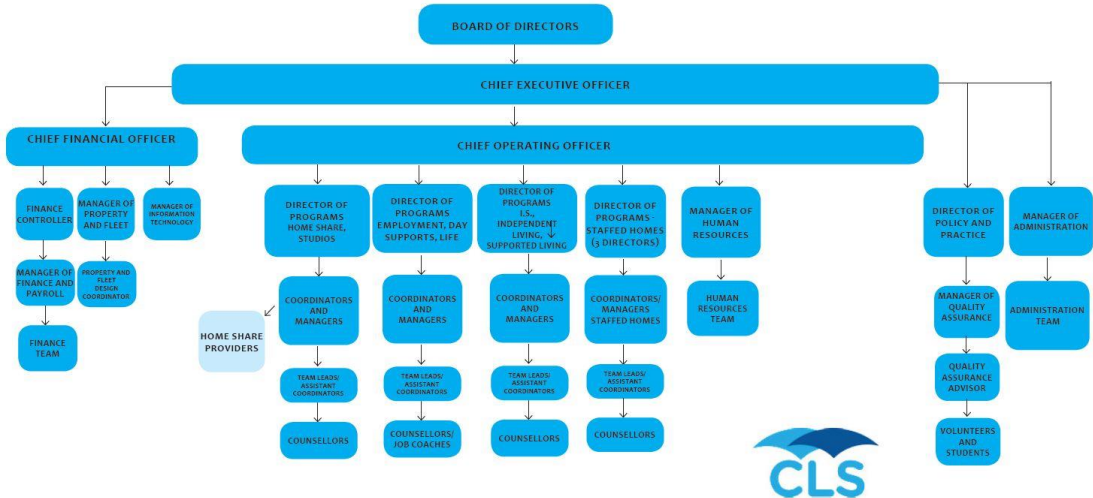
- Service delivery
- Personal property
- Conflict of Interest
- Professional responsibilities
- Setting boundaries
- Contractual relationships
- Use of social media
- Prohibition of waste
- Prohibition of fraud
- Prohibition of abuse
- Marketing
- Business
- Exchange of gifts, money and gratuities
- Personal Fund Raising
- Organizational Fund Raising
- Witnessing of legal documents
- All other wrongdoings

Employees are guided by a set of goals for you:

- ▶ To promote your sense of your own dignity and autonomy;
- ▶ To support your need for both relationships and privacy;
- ▶ To enhance your sense of responsibility;
- ▶ To ensure your health and safety;
- ▶ To support you to set and achieve your goals;
- ▶ To facilitate and support the connection of you in your communities and access community services.

Our Organization Chart

How We Are Organized



Introducing the Range of Services We Offer

Staffed Homes

Employees help you: to take care of your home (with cooking, budgeting, personal care, recreation, seek and receive medical attention), be healthy and safe, improve your ability to communicate, stay in touch with the people you care about and who care about you, be a good neighbour and contribute positively to your community. Always, the goal is to help you to gain the skills you need to be in control of your own life. We make sure that family and friends are able to be part of your life and help you to make decisions if you want their help.

Home Share

Home Sharing is a unique lifestyle that supports independence and builds relationships between yourself, your personal support network and communities. Home Sharing is for people who want to share a home with a family or a person. Supports may include assistance with self-care and relationship building, life skills, meal preparation, personal care and use of community resources and services.

Independent Living

Independent Living services provides you with the option of living independently in the community, with minimal assistance (up to 10 hours a week) in daily living. This service is available to people who own, lease, or rent their own homes. The Independent Living Program provides targeted support through one-on-one sessions which can be in person or virtual. For instance, you might only want to work on paying your bills once a month and setting up a weekly budget.

Supported Living

Supported Living services are designed for people who want to live in a home that CLS owns and manages but would need ongoing support to do so. Support is different for everyone as people have different wants and needs. Some people need only a few (10) hours of support each week and others may need up to 30 hours.

Individualized Supports

Individualized Supports are one-on-one (not group) supports and can occur in your home or take part in community. The type of support provided can focus on skill development, community inclusion or outreach. Supports respond to your strengths, individuality and changing needs.

Support hours received will depend upon your current support needs as determined by the funder (Community Living British Columbia or the Acquired Brain Injury Program). These hours cover both direct service time with you (time with employees) and the time needed to support service development and ongoing support.

Community Inclusion

This service is designed for people who require ongoing support to participate in community. The programs supports you to be involved and participate in a way that is meaningful to you. The support occurs outside of your home (community based), through a community embedded program, or with 1:1 support through the Individualized Supports program or may operate within your home (home based community Inclusion).

Employment Services

The CLS supports job seekers who have funding through Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) develop skills to obtain “real work for real pay”. We support people to obtain meaningful, community-based employment, and to earn competitive wages and benefits like other members of the community.

L.I.F.E

L.I.F.E services is a community employment and inclusion service with the focus on supporting you in:

- Lifelong Learning;
- Inclusion and Involvement in your communities;
- Developing Friendships and Relationships;
- Paid Employment.

L.I.F.E. is a one-to-one service meaning that employees are completely focussed on you while you are working together.

Art Studios

The CLS has two studios where artists receive support to reach their artistic aspirations. The artists display their work at various venues throughout the Lower Mainland and online. This is a source of revenue for the artists.

Information and Communication Technologies

CLS services are typically provided in-person.

However, sometimes we may use technology to support you. This means, we may make certain types of support available to you, your personal support network, and other professionals through the use of information and communication technologies such as video-conferencing (Facetime, Zoom, and Teams), or texting and group chats, etc. We only do this when we have your consent and the *Information and Communication Technologies Consent* has been reviewed and signed so everyone involved knows their rights and responsibilities.



Examples of when we might use information and communication technology:

- ▶ To include your personal support network members or other professionals in meetings/planning sessions when they can't attend in person.
- ▶ Consultations with medical specialists or other professionals to see and work with you in order to make their services more accessible. In these cases, you may also need to sign agreements and consent with these professionals.
- ▶ Providing support to you if you live independently in your home rather than coming into your home to provide support in-person.

These types of 'virtual' connections can help increase your access to the supports you need and/or can make it more possible for you to include the people you want in planning your services.

Please note that this is all optional and you do not have to receive support this way.
You decide!!

When you begin services with CLS and/or during your planning sessions, we will talk with you about your preferences regarding using information and communication technologies. You will need to decide if you have or are willing to invest in any hardware, accompanying Wi-Fi, or cellular plans that are required to access these services. If you do not have the necessary device(s), you need to know that CLS can help you explore options to cover these costs, however, we cannot fund these for you or members of your personal support network.

If you choose to use information and communication technologies as a part of your service along with the necessary device(s), we will make sure you have the information and support you need to be able to participate as outlined in the *Information and Communication Technologies Consent*.

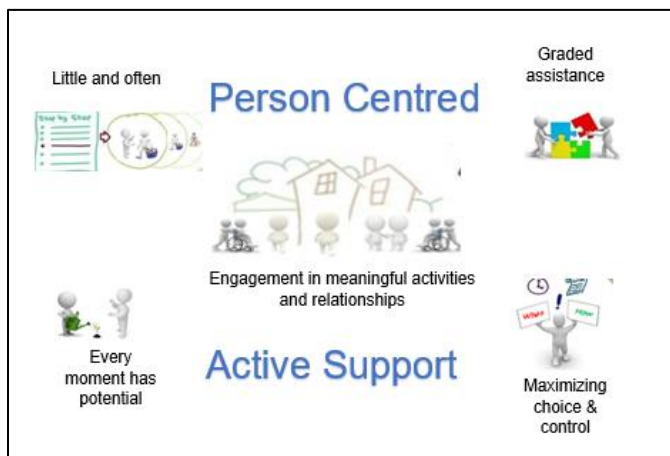
Please note that we can only explore this service format with people who live in the communities we serve and actively receiving supports from CLS.

Keeping You at the Centre – Person Centred Practice

Person Centred Active Support (PCAS)

Person Centred Active Support is an approach we take that calls on all of us to make sure we are providing you with just the right amount of support - not too much and not too little.

We believe that PCAS empowers you in a really positive way to do things for yourself when possible, rather than having us take over and do it for you. PCAS also allows you to get the right type of assistance from us when you need it.



All CLS employees and contracted Home Share Providers are trained in the Person Centred Active Supports Approach (PCAS).

Person Centred Planning

The **Individual Service and Quality of Life Plan** (ISQLP) engages you and your personal support network to identify your dreams, goals, strengths, needs, preferences, and aspirations. This plan is reviewed and updated annually. The ISQLP process begins with reviewing 4 main areas of your life:

- your home life;
- community involvement;
- relationships;
- and health and safety.

Through this process, we assist you in identifying and setting meaningful / purposeful goals that support you move forward towards the life you want. As part of our person centred planning, we will also help you and/or your personal network to develop specific support plans that address your needs. These may include any or all of the following:

Care Plan

This plan sets out the assistance and support you may need in daily life. The care plan includes your medical history, your current medical support, emergency contact information, lifestyle and personal preferences, activities of daily living, community access and behavioural supports. It provides guidance for your support team in how to meet your needs on a daily basis. We will review this with you every year or as needed to keep it up to date.

Health Care Plan

If you have critical health care needs that call for the intervention or involvement of a health professional, we will work with the appropriate health professional(s). It includes procedures and training requirements as well as emergency protocols. If a health care plan is required, we will make sure the plan is in place before you start services and that it is updated regularly.

Positive Behaviour Support Plan/Safety Plan

Sometimes a behaviour plan will be put in place to help you with any challenging behaviours you may have that are impacting your ability to enjoy your life to the fullest and/or that put other people at risk. It is developed in conjunction with a psychologist or behavioural interventionist/consultant, and includes specific prevention measures, training, strategies, and interventions to help you manage your behaviour and may include a Safety Plan or De-escalation Plan.

Annual Family/Personal Support Network Engagement Review

This meeting provides an opportunity for you, your personal support network, and us to work together to help define roles and provide an opportunity for increased information sharing and involvement of the people closest to you. It is intended to compliment the existing supports provided by the CLS. This is reviewed annually as a team at your ISQLP meeting. This practice helps to make sure that your current vision and expectations that you develop with your personal support network will continue into the future as your life and the people in your personal support network's lives change. This annual review helps everyone involved to respectfully, and easily, carry on with your important relationships, decision making, communication, traditions, and overall quality of your care.

Supporting You to Exercise Your Rights and Responsibilities

In our work with you, we make sure you know about, and have support to exercise your rights as a Canadian Citizen and as a participant in our services.

At CLS, you have the right to:

- Love others and be loved;
- Be treated with dignity and respect;
- Make choices about all parts of your life;
- Be healthy and safe;
- Choose who you want to help you make decisions, and be at meetings about you;
- Get help to remove the things that are stopping you from getting what you need;
- Be given information about how to keep yourself safe;
- Be given information about how to manage your money;
- Have your support reviewed regularly;
- Receive the support that fits your needs, even if your needs change;
- Ask for a change when you don't like something, or have the chance to choose something new or different;
- Make a complaint without anyone getting mad at you (without fearing/worrying about repercussion);
- Be given information about your community;
- Have personal information about you kept private;
- Have access to your personal information;
- Live in a home you like and participate in your community;
- Learn about yourself; what you like and what you are good at;
- Make decisions and decide your own goals;
- Make your goals happen, and get help to do so;
- Make friends and be close to your personal support network;
- Have privacy in your home;
- Be able to trust the people you live with and who support you, to ask for what you need;
- Find out about and celebrate your own cultural and religious beliefs and customs;
- Get information about how to advocate for yourself and how to join a self-advocacy group;



Exercising
Your Rights

- Get help to get any equipment or special help to meet your goals;
- Get legal advice or help from a lawyer if you need it;
- Not participate in any research projects unless you want to.

Charter of Rights (In Plain Language)

- The Right to Life;
- The Right to Freedom;
- The Right to control what happens to your body;
- The Right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law;
- The Right of choice;
- The Right to informed consent (to know your choices);
- The Right to have things explained to you;
- The right to be heard;
- The Right to see a lawyer or other advisor;
- The Right to have enough money to buy food, have a place to live, and decent clothes;
- The Right to proper medical care;
- The Right to charge someone if they hurt you or take something of yours;
- The Right to be educated;
- The Right to apply for a job and be taken seriously;
- The Right to safe working and living conditions.

“Rights are the rules that help make people equal. You are entitled to the same rights under the law as everyone else because you are a person and a citizen. Some rights are there when you are born. These are often called Human Rights because every human being has them. Some rights are yours when you become old enough. Some rights are yours because you live in Canada. There are laws to help make sure no one takes away your rights. Rights, which are upheld by law, make sure no one takes away your Rights. Rights that are upheld by law are known as legal rights.”

People First, Canada

Just like we want others to respect your rights, we ask that you respect the rights of others.

At CLS, you have a responsibility to...

- Treat others around you with respect and dignity;
- Be a participating member of your community;
- Carry out your goals with the support you need;
- Let someone you trust know if you have a concern about yourself or anyone else;
- Respect the personal property and information of others including other individuals, visitors, employees, and the CLS;
- Contact the CLS if you will be absent from your supports as this may affect your funding.

Protecting Your Health, Safety, and Well-being

Your health, safety and well-being are top priorities. Here are some of the ways in which we make sure we support you:

Emergency Preparedness

Every program, including our Home Shares, are well prepared to respond to unexpected emergencies, such as a fire or an earthquake, in ways that meet your needs.

Preparation is the Key



Medication

We make sure the employees and contracted caregivers who administer medications are appropriately trained and that medications are stored in a secure way. Medications that accompany you to a CLS program must follow specific safety protocols. You will be informed of these protocols, when necessary.

Standard Precautions/Personal Protective Equipment

Employees, volunteers/students, and contracted caregivers are informed and equipped to protect themselves and you from undue risks related to blood or other bodily fluids/air-borne risks. They work with you and your personal support network to minimize these risks and will develop special protocols to respond to pandemics.

First Aid Certification

All employees and contracted caregivers must maintain certification in First Aid.

External Monitoring

We are inspected regularly by the local Fire Department, Community Living British Columbia, an external building inspector, Community Care Licensing (for licensed programs), and by the Council on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Our Home Share Providers undergo annual health and safety inspections and are monitored regularly. We are also accountable to WorkSafe BC and various provincial government ministries for following provincial health and safety rules.

Risk and Safety Planning

We work with you and your personal support network to anticipate health or safety risks or concerns, and to determine ways to address them. We update and revise plans as your situation and needs change over time. We make sure all employees and contracted caregivers know about changes and can respond in a consistent way. These plans are reviewed with you and your personal support network as needed, or at least once a year.

Reporting of Abuse

We uphold your right to be treated with respect, dignity and to be protected from any form of abuse, neglect, harm, or the threat of harm. We will work with employees, families, licensing, funders, and regulatory bodies to respond promptly and effectively to any instances of suspected (or actual) abuse or neglect. CLS has policies and procedures in place to follow in the event a report is required.

Respecting the Dignity of Risk and Building Your Safeguards

Even though your safety and wellbeing are important to us, we do not believe we should ‘protect or prevent’ you from doing the things you want to do. We know that you will be stronger, safer, and more comfortable in your life when you make your own choices and learn from them. Our goal is to help you to make informed choices about the life you want to lead and the activities you choose to do. We do this by working with you to explore options, to think about the risks and benefits of different actions and the skills you might need to be successful, and to learn from the choices you do make.

The Dignity Of Risk

We also help you to develop safeguards for yourself to help you in areas where you may not feel so confident or comfortable or where others in your personal support network are concerned about your risk in certain situations. Safeguards can include:

- Learning new skills to help you manage in areas where you have difficulties or are less confident.
- Learning about and connecting to community resources in your neighbourhood where you can access support.
- Building a **Natural Circle of Safeguards** who you can count on to support you. This circle includes:
 - Your personal support network of family and friends.
 - Members of your CLS support team –Home Share Providers, Doctors, Counsellors, ~~Support Workers~~, etc.
 - Community members who know and can help you in their settings such as bus drivers, people you know at places where you go frequently, etc.

Listening to You

It’s important that you and/or members of your personal support network tell us about any health or safety concerns you have. We commit to listen to you and to do our best to address them.

Decision Making and Legal Authority

Making important decisions can be challenging for everyone. You may want to do this all on your own, you may want to have someone advise you, or you may need someone to make these decisions for you. It is important understand the support that is available for you. If you make decisions all on your own, none of the information below will apply to you. You will be what we call “your own legal authority”. If other people have input in important decisions, they will have to have one of the following documents on file at the CLS.

Representation Agreement

A Representative is a person named by an adult in a Representation Agreement to support the adult to make decisions or make decision on their behalf. There are two types of Representation Agreements:

- Representation Agreement (Section 7) - an adult may name a representative to help make decisions, or make decisions on behalf of the adult, with respect to personal care and health care, the routine management of financial affairs and obtaining legal services for the adult and instructing counsel.
- Representation Agreement (Section 9) - an adult may name a representative to do anything that the representative considers necessary in relation to the personal care or health care of the adult.

Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a document that appoints another person, called an "attorney," to make financial and legal decisions if they are unable to do so. The “attorney” cannot make health care decisions on behalf of the person.



Public Trustee (PGT)

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) is a corporation established under the Public Guardian and Trustee Act with a unique statutory role to protect the interests of British Columbians who lack legal capacity to protect their own interests.

Private Trustee

A Private Committee (pronounced caw-mi-tay, or caw-mi-tee, with emphasis on the end of the word) is a person or body usually appointed by the BC Supreme Court under the Patients Property Act to manage the financial, business, legal affairs (Committee of Estate) and/or personal and health care decisions (Committee of Person) of someone who is not capable of looking after these matters. Most often Private Committees are family members or friends.

Respecting Your Privacy, Confidentiality, and Consent

Information About You

We keep the information you share with us in your individual record or file. This record includes all the information we gather to support you. It may include information from other people that you have shared with us such as a report from your doctor or a support plan. We also add notes about the time we spend with you and all our meetings or other work on your behalf so we can track the support we provide and our progress in supporting your goals. Most information about you is stored on ShareVision, our secure electronic information management system. Any paper files we keep are locked and electronic files have passwords to protect your privacy and confidentiality.

Access to Your Information

You may review any information that we have written about you that is in your file by asking any member of your CLS team. If you feel that anything in the file is incorrect, you can ask us to review it.

How Information is Used and Shared at CLS

Only CLS employees and contracted caregivers who are working directly with you and/or are involved in quality control or monitoring of your services have access to your information and only for the job they are assigned to do.

Additionally, our funders need to monitor your services and make sure they are working for you. They require us to share information about the service we provide you with them, and to report any critical incidents or other concerns. As part of participating in CLS services, you are consenting to this exchange of information.

We also maintain best practice standards for our services and regularly renew our accreditation with CARF, an organization that helps us by sending people (surveyors) to review our services and meet with participants. They look at a sample of files so they can assess our practices. Surveyors are bound by confidentiality.

Consent

Consent to Services:

Before you start services with us, we make sure you know enough about the services to agree to receiving supports from the CLS.



Consent to Share Information:

We do not share any information about you outside CLS without your consent. We will ask you to sign a consent form for each person or organization you agree can have information about you.

Limits to Consent to Share Information:

On the consent form that you sign, you will see that there are certain situations where CLS is required by law to share information without consent. These include:

- Abuse (this is when someone is hurting you);
- Neglect (this is when someone is not taking care you as needed);
- Suicide Threats (this is when you say that you will hurt yourself or take your own life);
- Subpoenaed Information (this is when a judge has given us a court order to share information).

Consent to Release – Photograph/Video:

We will also ask you to provide consent in order to use your photo, video, or any other images of you. Like all consents, you have the right to say ‘no’ and to choose when and how your image and/or name might be used if you do provide consent.

Your consents are reviewed with you and your personal support network as needed, or at least once a year during the ISQLP meeting. You also have the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Monitoring the Quality of Our Services

At CLS, we want to be sure our services are the best they can be. We do this by:

- Talking with you and getting your **Ideas and Suggestions** about our services;
- Asking everyone involved including you, your personal support network, our employees, our funders, and our community partners to complete **Feedback Surveys**;
- Tracking, reviewing, and learning from other input we receive such as complaints, compliments, and community input;
- Setting program goals to measure our effectiveness in delivering the services people want. We also set goals to measure service access, program satisfaction and program efficiency and make action plans to help us improve in these areas. These are outlined in our **Annual Performance Measurement Report**;
- Having our services **Accredited** by a team of people from an organization called CARF. They take time to meet with you, your personal support network members, observe our services, review our files, and offer suggestions and recommendations about ways we can improve our services.
- Meeting **Government and Other Regulatory Standards and Service Principles** that apply to all of our services. We must follow them in order to receive funding and to deliver services. Our funding and licensing agencies regularly review what we are doing, require written reporting from us, and provide us with information about our compliance with their regulations.



Building Our Relationship with You

Both you and the members of your personal support network are valued members of the CLS community who we count on to give us input and to help guide the organization.

Ways to be Involved

There are lots of ways you can be involved with CLS if you wish. We organize special events during the year that provide ~~informal~~ opportunities to gather and network with other Supported Individuals, families, employees, and volunteers. We invite you to attend these events.

Here are some other ways you or your personal support network members can get involved.

- Join the Society as a member and attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Membership is free, and the AGM is a chance to meet other Supported Individuals and family members, vote for Board members, and influence the future direction of CLS.
- Participate in focus groups to provide feedback or contribute to our strategic plan.

Keeping You Informed

We work hard to make sure you are kept up to date, not only about what's happening within your programs or services but also throughout CLS and the community living sector. We distribute our quarterly **Communicator** newsletter as well as the **Family Matters** newsletter to you and your primary contact and also provide updates on our public website www.communitylivingsociety.ca. Make sure you give us your email address and get on the mailing list so you can keep informed.

We also keep you and your personal support network informed through e-mail or direct contact about any new or emerging topics of interest or issues that may have a direct impact on your service and/or other supports in your life, such as changes to Persons with Disability (PWD) rates, changes in service delivery formats, or other community and sector issues.

We do our best to provide current updates on our programs, training opportunities, upcoming events, and activities. We'll also share articles and stories by the Supported Individuals we serve, families, employees, and community partners. With emerging technology, we will continue to explore ways to be in touch with you and invite you to share your feedback and ideas with us.

Keeping Us Informed

In order for us to be effective in supporting you, we ask that you keep us informed of anything happening in your life. Please be sure to:

- provide us with the information we need to offer the best possible support or service;
- communicate openly with us and let us know about any concerns – we welcome your feedback;
- keep us updated about any changes to your contact information or the contact information of people in your personal network and/or other changes that may affect their ability to actively engage with you;
- let us know about changes in your life – a new job, a change in your household, etc.



Taking an Active Role in Your Services

We ask that you and your /personal support network take an active role in making your service the best that it can be:

- participate in orientation activities and assist in training employees and contracted caregivers about your needs and preferences;
- engage in your planning sessions – take the lead or choose who you want to take the lead for you;
- find out about and follow the program policies and guidelines to get the most from your services;
- ask questions, make your preferences known and be curious if you don't understand.

Addressing Your Problems, Concerns or Complaints

CLS believes in developing relationships that are open, trusting, and respectful.

As part of our ongoing focus on quality improvement, we want to hear from you when things are not working as well as you expect. We can all learn and grow together when we work with each other to deal with problems that arise. Our first step in addressing problems is an informal discussion with the intention of resolving the concern right away. This is called an **Informal Complaint**.

Most questions and concerns get resolved this way and don't need to go further. But sometimes, when concerns are more complex and you are not happy with the proposed solution, you may find you want to take your concern to a higher level of the organization to address. This is called making a **Formal Complaint**.

The Informal Complaint

As part of the orientation to services, we take time to talk about the importance of bringing your concerns to us and review these important points:

- ✓ We encourage you to share your concerns whether they are big or small with your team or contracted caregivers so they know what's troubling you and can work with you to find a way to address them. Don't wait, tell them before your concerns get too big or uncomfortable.
- ✓ We make sure you know who you can talk to if the problem is with an employee or contracted caregivers, and you don't feel you can comfortably deal with it with them.
- ✓ We provide information to you about our formal complaint process so you can use it if you feel that your concerns have not been addressed.

IMPORTANT

CLS wants to hear from you when you have concerns.

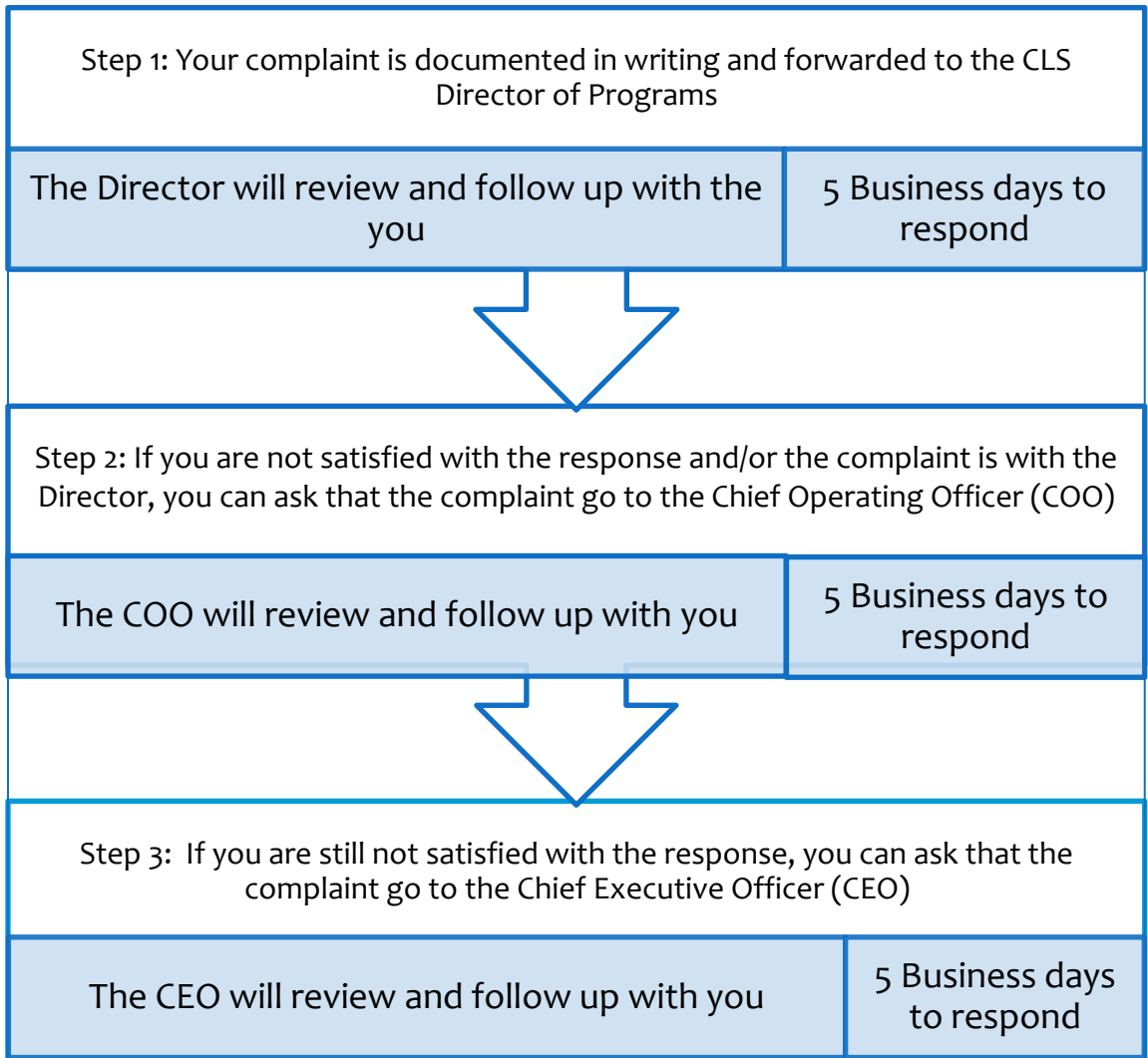
Making an informal or formal complaint **will not have any negative effects on your services or how we treat you.**

Please take the time to let us know when things aren't working!

Our Formal Complaint Process

We have taken time to develop a step-by-step process to make sure we give your complaint the attention it deserves if you haven't been able to resolve it informally.

How Our Formal Complaints Process Works



Please note, that you have the right to have an advocate of your choice to help you bring forward your complaint formally or informally. You also have the right, at any time, to take your concern to other organizations outside of CLS, like the government agency that funds your services (Quality Assurance Office) or to the health authority in your region such as Vancouver Coastal Health or Fraser Health. We can supply you with contact information for them.

Supporting You When You Leave Our Services

You and/or your personal support network may choose to end services because you are managing well on your own and no longer feel you need our supports. In other cases, you may choose to end services for personal reasons such as: health issues requiring extra levels of support that can be better provided from other services, a change in your goals or living arrangements, or a decision to go with another service provider. We respect your choices and are happy to support you as you make this transition away from our services.



Moving out of CLS's Service Area

You must live in the community where CLS provides services in order for us to continue with your services if you move. However, there are many great organizations all over BC. If you decide to move outside our service area, make sure that you contact the government agency that funds your services, and they will refer you to another organization to access support.

Changing Levels of Support Needs

There may be times that we determine that you need more support than we can provide within the scope of our services, or that we do not have the capacity to provide you with the type or level of support you need. In these situations, we will work with you and the government agency that funds your services to assist in making a transition to more suitable services.

What You Can Expect from Us When You Leave Our Services

No matter what the reason for a change, we are here to help plan for and support the transition to your new environment. We prepare an exit summary that documents your reasons for leaving the CLS. We will work with you, your family members, and other agencies/programs to plan for your transition.

With your permission, we will follow up with you to solicit feedback on the transition to your new services to ensure you are satisfied.



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